

**REMARKS**

Claims 13-16 are all the claims pending in the application. By this Amendment, Applicant amends claims 13 and 15 to further clarify the invention.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant thanks the Examiner for initialing the references listed on form PTO/SB/08 A & B submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on August 29, 2003.

Turning to the merits of the Office Action, claims 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP Publication No. 2000-331341 to Nagao et al (hereinafter “Nagao”) as evidenced by U.S. Patent No. 5,229,895 to Schwarz (hereinafter “Schwarz”) and claims 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO00/65579 to Hashi et al. (hereinafter “Hashi”) in view of JP Publication No. 2000-33134 to Nagao et al. (hereinafter “Nagao”).

Of the rejected claims, only claims 13 and 15 are independent. Independent claims 13 and 15, as now amended, recite: “said ground surface still forms a protrusion portion on the master medium.” Applicant respectfully submits that Nagao as evidenced by Schwarz and the combined teachings of Hashi and Nago do not meet at least this unique feature of claims 13 and 15.

In an exemplary, non-limiting embodiment of the present invention, the surface of the protrusion portion of the master medium is ground at least once after the manufacture of the master medium and prior to the master medium transferring data to a slave medium. The grinding of the master medium is performed in order to remove the scratches from the surface of the master medium and to remedy the wear of the surface of the master medium bearing data to

be transferred. The scratches, for example, may be generated due to the presence of dust on the surface of the master medium. The wear of the surface of the master medium, on the other hand, may be caused by the friction generated by rubbing together of the respective contact surfaces of the master medium and the slave medium after repeated performance of the magnetic transfer. Hence, the grinding of the master medium is used to remedy the wear and to remove the scratches in the protrusion portion. The protrusion portion, however, still remains after it has been ground. This passage is provided by way of an explanatory example only and is not intended to limit the scope of the claims in any way.

Nagao, on the other hand, teaches removing the photoresist by a lift-off technique. Moreover, the surface of the master medium is polished to remove the burr and to flatten the surface (col. 7, lines 44 to 46 of U.S. Patent No. 6,433,944, which is a counterpart of JP 2000-331341 A). That is, the purpose of the polishing of the master medium in Nagao is clearly difference from that of the grinding according to claims 13 and 15. Moreover, in Nagao, during the manufacture of the master medium, the surface is polished and flattened. In other words, in Nagao, after the manufacture, there are no protrusions on the surface of the master medium.

In short, the produced master medium has a flat polished surface with no protrusions. As taught in claim 1 of Nagao, for example, (both in the JP 2000-331341 and the U.S. Patent No. 6,433,944) the surface portions of transfer information recording sectors and the surface portions of the non-magnetic material provided between the adjacent transfer information recording sectors form substantially the same plane. This means that there are no protrusions on the surface of the master medium of Nagao. Accordingly, Nagao does not disclose or even remotely suggest the grinding of the protrusion portion on the surface of the master medium after the manufacture

of the master medium and prior to the master medium transferring data to a slave medium in such a manner that the protrusion portion still remains after the grinding thereof.

In addition, Hashi does not cure this deficiency of Nagao. Hashi does not disclose or even remotely suggests the grinding of the protrusion portion on the surface of the master medium after the manufacture of the master medium and prior to the master medium transferring data to a slave medium in such a manner that the protrusion portion still remains after the grinding thereof.

Therefore, "said ground surface still forms a protrusion portion on the master medium," as set forth in claims 13 and 15, is not suggested or taught by Nagao as evidenced by Schwarz and/or Hashi in view of Nagao (taken alone or in any conceivable combination), which lack having a protrusion portion on the ground surface of the master medium after the grinding. For at least these exemplary reasons, claims 13 and 15 are patentably distinguishable from Nagao as evidenced by Schwarz and are patentable over the combined teachings of Hashi and Nagao. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw this rejection of claims 13 and 15. Claims 14 and 16 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency on claims 13 and 15, respectively.


In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116  
U.S. Application No. 10/650,830

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Natalya Dvorsen  
Registration No. 56,616

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC  
Telephone: (202) 293-7060  
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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